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563 The Chinese druggists, many of whom stocked among their traditional pharmacopeia a few modern medications, gave out occasionally to their customers information derived from the manufacturer's instructions for use. People with minor indispositions sometimes sought a druggist's advice. He suggested traditional or modern remedies, depending on the wishes of the customer. Thus, the druggists also acted as a bridge to the use of modern remedies.

484 Facets of Social Life Pertinent to Childbearing: Communication and Transportation

People went to Minburi, and less often to Bangkok, to buy, sell, work, or visit relatives. A few adults had never been outside Bang Chan.

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493 Along the road buses passed Bang Chan every two or three hours during the daytime only. Minburi was a ten minute ride, Bangkok, an hour. Minburi had no taxis, and no telephone existed to call a taxi from Bangkok. Two or three persons owned bicycles.

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484 Within Bang Chan, transportation varied with the season. From June to February travel was entirely by boat, even to a neighbor. A message to a local midwife, for instance, could be carried quickly by a speedy paddler in his skiff. If an emergency trip to the Minburi Health Center appeared necessary, a person could be rowed fairly comfortably along the canal that bordered the road. Going by boat to Bangkok, a whole day's row away, or four hours by the motor boat from Minburi, was not considered convenient even for passenger traffic, much less for a sick person or a woman in labor.

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494 The inconvenient time of year was the three month dry season. Boats then could hardly go on the canal that ran through the middle of Bang Chan, while the smaller canals became muddy or even dry. Walking barefoot over sharp stubble in tropical sun was hard. To transport a woman in labor, assuming she could stand it, an improvised stretcher could be made, but to subject her to the jolting bus was usually foolhardy. It was not customary to flag down passing cars. If things went wrong for a woman in labor during the hot, dry season, there was practically no chance of getting her to a hospital, and none of getting modern help to her.

243 433 Work Habits in the Economy

Because of the annual flood the land was admirably suited to growing a single bounteous crop of rice. After all needs for

828 or fainting, and also such localized trauma as abscesses.
 753 Similar behavior followed the influence of malevolent magical
 amulets, incantations, and love magic. Natural intrusions
 may be exemplified by the seasonal influences of rain, which
 brought on too much water element; of heat, which increased
 fire; and of wind, which cooled too much or brought in
 certain fevers, e.g. north fever (khai nua). An accident was
 a natural cause of disequilibrium. A cut might let out the
 air or a soul.

774 Any lost soul, if not restored, meant death. Souls were
 761 lost from falls or frights or from spirit attack, a condition
 753 recognized by persistent crying, hysteria, and unconsciousness.
 The exits were at the top of the head, the palms of the hands,
 and the soles of the feet, the latter 2 sometimes localized
 at the 2 thumbs and the 2 great toes. One of the old beliefs
 associated an element with one of the four chattaphut souls
 (Textor:190). When one of these souls was lost one whole
 element was gone. Loss of the khwan soul was more frequent
 than any other, especially during childhood. Its care
 throughout life was very much in mind. The khwan¹⁸ played an
 [844] especially prominent part during childbirth.

755 If a person were only slightly sick, he might first try
 762 to overcome his physical complaint by attention to diet.
 757 Very rarely did he by himself buy some medicine at a drug
 store. If it were a case of a child's lost khwan, women
 performed the rite for its recovery. When the khwan of an
 adult was affected, men performed a strengthening rite (tham
khwan), or a priest gave a holy water bath. If the person
 were very ill, holy cotton thread (sai sin) was tied at
 wrist, ankle, and neck so as to shut off the soul exits. An
 elder relative or spouse might also "bon," i.e. vow food or
 liquor in return for the help of supernatural beings; or,
 with Buddhist "sacred things" in mind, promise the ordination
 of the afflicted person, or oneself, or some interested
 relative. In this case, the relatives had long since turned
 for help from the arts of medicine.

• 278 The Arts of Medicine

755 Medical knowledge comprised on the one hand a pharmacology
 of materia medica, and on the other, the far more important

18. The conceptualization of this soul was Brahmanic in
 source, rather than Buddhist (cf. Martinie, 1952:370).

magical formulae and incantations (khāthā cf. Textor 1960:80-99, 67-79). It was one of the branches of occultism (saivasāt [McF. 1940:895]), the ancient science which sought by magical means to control the forces of the heavens and of earth and to manipulate them in behalf of man's interests and enterprises, whether economic, aesthetic, personal, or other. Some of the other branches were dancing, singing, the agricultural rites, boxing, boat- and house-building, and the life-cycle rites. This powerful wisdom was contained in sacred books at the Buddhist temple where it passed, usually orally, from priest to priest. It could be transmitted away from the temple between men, if they had once been ordained. Its transmission was controlled by ritual teacher-pupil relations, and its use by formal request through presentation of a sacred offering, the khwan khāo (cf. Duan's Tale p.44). Unauthorized magic did not work because it was not validated by its supernatural discoverer; improper ritual behavior incurred strong supernatural sanctions. Instruction in magic and its use was free except for the token offerings and coin in the khwan khāo. The only rigid obligation was a public annual homage-to-the-teacher ritual (wai khru).

The persons authorized to handle any part of saivasāt were called mō. In the context of medicine, mō was translated "doctor." To keep the modern and ancient traditions separate, we shall use the Thai word "mō" throughout this paper for the practitioner of the ancient occult art, reserving the word "doctor" for physicians trained in modern medicine.

The field of medicine was split into categories or specialties. There were, for instance, the exorcisers of spirits or disease objects (mō phi), and the curers (mō rakaē) who made up decoctions particularly for element imbalances. Astrologist-foretellers (mō dū) analysed disturbances due to astral confluences; soul-ceremonialists (mō khwan) carried on the khwan-strengthening rites; and the mō sanē specialized in love and hate magic. On a lower plane were masseurs (mō nuāt) and midwives (mō tamyae). No specialist could operate in the field of another unless he had formally acquired that specialty. No limits, though, were set on the number of specialties a person might acquire so that all their lives, mō were open to and seeking new knowledge by pilgrimage, discussion, or visit to a Chinese or modern druggist. The major curing specialties were only in the hands of males, but men and women both practiced the minor branches of midwifery and massaging.¹⁹

19. A woman medium (khonsong) who cured when possessed by the spirit of a male mō was not entitled to be called mō. Her special circumstances are discussed in "Magic and Maturity."

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sin for the sake of nourishing the child. Some Thai village women followed a local Chinese belief that eating a female chicken gave strength during pregnancy. Eating a rooster, though, caused miscarriage through "ectopic gestation." Thai Muslims recommended chicken whole-heartedly.

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Medicines

Beginning early in pregnancy, one or more kinds of medicine (yā) were taken. These hot-tasting medicines of ginger, galanga, pepper, and such in 28 per cent alcohol were either bought from the big selection at a Chinese drugstore, or were made up at home from alcohol or water and an envelope of ingredients. A woman made the choice herself with the advice of experienced persons. Even the Muslims who ordinarily frowned on alcohol permitted their women to take it at this time. A few women, though, said they "did not like to get drunk," so took their medicines in hot water. The quantity varied from two to six spoonfuls per day, with big increases as delivery approached, e.g. "two big cups a day of it during the ninth month."

The primary purpose of medicine was to increase the appetite, but there were other reasons. Fragrant Medicine (yā hauaum) cured wind. One Muslim midwife's mixture "stimulated the amniotic fluid." Other preparations had more general objectives. One label advertised "strength and good blood to men and beauty to women," another promised to "maintain the mother's body and make the inner organs do their work properly" (H.M.H.).

In the last months, the reason for the medicines was to build up the body's heat. This purpose was not affected by hot tastes, which burned but did not necessarily raise the heat, but rather by alcohol, cobra, and specific decoctions. A label cautioned, though, "Not to be used by pregnant women with fever," lest the increment of heat be excessive. Snake Brand medicine, an exceedingly hot concoction used primarily post-partum, was occasionally taken in mild dosage during pregnancy. (Used full strength it caused miscarriage, so was rumored to induce abortion). The heat raised the body's temperature far above the ordinarily desired coolness so as to implement birth.

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The Physiology of Birth

At parturition the body's usual needs were reversed. The child could not be ejected under the normal, cool condition of the body. The pushing and pulling winds inside the body that ordinarily circulated slowly had to be

speeded up with heat to the point of blasts. The strength of the contractions of labor was in direct proportion to the speed of the winds' circulation. The great pushes of the expulsive lom beng "broke down" the sac with the amniotic fluid (nam thun hua: water-that-supports-the-head-of-the-child), and forced out the child, water, and the placenta.

After the child was out, the mother was cold, weak, and exhausted. Her uterus was full of harmful fluids. Heat was needed more than ever not only to warm her but to give the winds "the power and push" to drive out three undesirable birth-waters: "The blood that looks like ordinary blood but is bad,"; the amniotic and abdominal body water (nam khram: refuse water); and the pale, viscous, repugnant "fish-water" (nam khao pla). Therefore, a hot fire was built, close to which the mother lay (yu fai), turning all sides of her body towards the flame. She bathed in or drank hot or warm boiled water (nam suk: cooked, or ripe, water). She ate safe foods like rice and dried fish,³¹ and kluai nam bananas, continued to take alcoholic medicines of the hottest sort, such as Snake Brand, and occasionally might be given cobra or other hot curries to eat. For a first-born, a woman stayed eleven or nine days by the fire (always an odd number), with stays shorter for each successive child, but never less than five days.

Complications sometimes developed because of inadequate control of the heat. A "headache and a hot body" indicating "stagnation of the blood and the fishy-smelling-water," was cured by a heat-producing decoction. Rashes often occurred, causing small boils that might develop into sores. To soothe these, turmeric was painted on. In the most dangerous cases the heat "drove the bad blood to the heart, to the face or belly" where it was recognized by serious swelling, with resulting madness or death. In fact, one mo felt that the

31. The reasons for rejecting fresh fish during pregnancy ("lest a creature of hell be born") would not hold after parturition. Yet fresh fish was rejected then too "as bad for the womb." One suspects that the less odorous dried fish was substituted so that the odor of fresh fish, like air-borne, incompatible food, would not affect adversely the "fish-smelling" post-partum discharge (nam khao pla). In Hauck's list of foods "bad for mother during the post-partum rest," the reasons are apparent: Sour tastes did not dry out the body, but built up water; egg was too cooling; jackfruit brought in wind; glutinous rice and the sugar of sweets "wet the uterus," fruits did not give strength and were excessively cooling (cf. Hauck, 1959:15).

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[824] heat could be better controlled by medicine alone, saying
"I do not prohibit a fire, but if called because of
difficulties such as a temporary paralysis, I always take
the patient off the fire and prescribe a decoction, or
recommend more pickled medicine (yá dōng)." "Damage to
the thigh ligaments," treated by a masseur, was said to
result from insufficient rest by the fire. If the baby
died, the mother did not curtail her fire-rest but finished
it out as planned. As will be seen later, the fire-rest
had far deeper meaning than just physiological restoration.

Chapter IV

THE BIRTH OF A CHILD

Duan and her husband, Song, had a 2 year old son, Chai.³² They lived and worked with her widowed mother, Lek, and her unmarried sister, Mi. The comfortable house stood high on piles, surrounded by rice fields. On a nearby mound lived Sai, 60 years old and full of energy, the youngest sister of her grandmother.

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Now Duan noticed that again her menses had stopped. Her mother had described before her marriage what this meant. With happiness in her eyes, as the first time, she told her husband, then her mother, and at the first opportunity, her husband's parents. There was no reason to keep her pregnancy secret. Since she and Song would be happy to have either a boy or a girl, she did not seek out the ritual means which existed to induce a child of a particular sex.

During the months of anticipation, Duan worked along as usual in farming and house-keeping. Lek reminded her of prudent behavior. "Women are easily upset when pregnant. It is up to you to put yourself in a cheerful mood. Everything you do will affect the infant in your womb. If you see a scarred person, your child will be scarred. Be calm, look only at pleasant things and avoid jerky motions. Do not overeat, lest the child be a glutton. If you sleep during the day and are inactive, you will also have a lazy child. Some girls are trying to be like Bangkok people, pleading that they cannot do heavy work in the last few weeks of pregnancy, but that will cause a difficult labor."

To increase her appetite, early in her pregnancy Duan visited a Chinese pharmacist to get medicine. He had so

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32. This account puts together data from several informants. Particularly illuminating phrases are quoted exactly, over and above the conversations, which, though fictionalized, are also direct transcriptions.

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many kinds she hardly knew which to choose. He also had all-purpose kits for mother and baby, even one with 14 different kinds of medicine "to control the body's temperature and keep the organs functioning" (H.M.H.). She decided on one of the favorites, pickled medicine (*lae dauang*), and from then on took a spoonful twice a day. She avoided all peppery-hot foods which would "damage the delicate complexion of the infant in the womb, burn off its hair, and maybe even kill it." Some women said they craved sweet, hot, or sour foods, but Duan did not. A friend who had never eaten cobra curry so longed for its hot taste during her pregnancy that her mother gave her a small dish. She could not resist secretly finishing the whole pot! What heat and sleeplessness! To cool herself, she had sat in the canal. The baby, saved only because its mother drank the water from a young coconut fruit, "could resist the cobra heat because it was 6 months along, but even so, it shed its skin at birth." But another woman, pregnant 7 months with her third child, also craved cobra curry, ate a lot, and said she did not feel hot. Nothing at all happened! The second woman was nearer to delivery, so stood the heat better, but more important, each individual was different. Because of virtue and sin in former lives each woman--and man, too--was born under different astral confluences and had lived and suffered differently.

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About the seventh month, Duan pondered who should help her at her delivery. Some of her friends were delivered by their own mothers, but Lek had undertaken the delivery of another daughter's child, and the baby had died in an hour. Duan suspected that her mother, therefore, would prefer not to do it, and knew that she herself would feel uneasy. So she decided for safety's sake to ask a midwife. She and Song could well afford the ceremonial offering with its customary 20 or so *bah*, even though the midwife said it was "as you please." A great many women never consulted with a midwife beforehand at all, but just sent word to the nearest one when the pains started or when trouble was encountered. Midwives varied in their capabilities, however, and Duan wanted not only a good one but someone she knew well. Muslim midwives were said to be skilled, but they happened to live too far from her. Duan decided to ask her elder aunt, Sai, who was a well known midwife. Everything was right about Sai. She had experienced hands, a true desire to help, and effective magic; and she was a relative. Best of all, her own babies had eaten and slept well, had cried little, and now were grown to maturity. With such proof of merit, capabilities, and fortunate relations with supernatural powers, what better person to help Duan start her baby on its earthly existence? Actually, if something happened, and Sai could not come, Duan knew she would not be alone or unassisted. Almost every woman, and quite a few men, had

seen childbirth not once, but many times, so willing hands abounded. So, one day, Duan went to Sai. "Will you help me, and come when I call you? Please do not go far at that time." Sai agreed, knowing in her heart she had expected to care for Duan. No day could be calculated because the baby decided when to be born. Duan came home very fast, for doing so would help ensure a fast delivery.

As the weeks passed, Song, the new child's father, collected outside the house a great cone of sakas firewood from their land. This wood was for the post-partum fire beside which Duan would lie for many days. As the fire had to be very hot, a great deal of wood was needed, all to be collected beforehand. Song also covered the outside of the pile with thorny woods to keep away evil spirits. On her part, Duan knew that everything needed for delivery was ready in the house as part of the regular household staples or utensils. Nothing need be bought except possibly a little Borneo camphor to mix with lemon grass for faintness, and alum. The midwife should never bring anything with her because it was essential to use what was in the house. Anything lacking could be quickly borrowed after the pains started. The little cushion on which the baby was to lie was cut, and half-filled with kapok. It was not sewn up, lest it induce by example a closed-up exit from the womb, or suggest a mal-placed or deformed baby which had to be delivered onto a pillow. No one wanted to prepare for such an unhappy event. No clothing was bought for the child ahead of time for then the child might die, and all would have to be destroyed.

Duan felt at ease and yet somewhat frightened at the prospect of the pain ahead. At an ordination she attended one night she listened again to the chant she had heard many times:

"In childbirth a woman has pain all over her body...She is losing her soul and feels so frightened, despairing, and suffering that she throws herself up and down from time to time as if her mind were terribly wounded by the poisonous arrow of a hunter. She is uneasy and moans loudly as if a big mountain had fallen down upon her, and she is supposed to wait for death. She does not recover even if massaged by someone. She does not think of her pain, but tries to save the child's life, when, after the pushing wind comes, he is born" (S.S.).

On other occasions she pondered the deep satisfaction of her maternal role, then laughed in recalling a crafty woman who

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 [278] fast enough to break the amniotic sac. Sāi made her a medicine of mung bean and sugar, both of which wet the uterus, and murmured some magic words to help. Later she worked with her hands at the vagina, twisting the sac a bit to break it. Suddenly the sac ruptured.

[789] Now the child was almost there. The head showed well. Sāi sat down directly in front of Dūan to do the pressing herself. With one hand she held or gently pulled on the baby, with the other she pressed on the abdomen with every contraction. As she started in, she said magic words. She worked for an hour--no midwife would press more than that--until at last the child was out. A little boy! With her finger Sāi removed the blood from his mouth, and puckered out the lips. Breathing was slow in coming, so she shook him vigorously, then laid him down. Quickly she chewed up an onion and spit it over his body. "Ah-h-h!" A cry, though not very strong! Seeing the new baby appear, Chai, who up to then had been constantly near his mother, rushed precipitously from the house, and refused to come in for hours, in spite of Song and Lek's coaxing.

[787] Everyone had observed an auspicious circumstance: the cord was looped around the baby's neck! This imitation of the holy cord (mongkhon) placed around head and neck in Brahman rites of passage was a rare and good sign. "A cord looped thus could never kill a baby," someone said.

[278] Since the placenta was slow in coming, Sāi prepared to cut the cord while Dūan rested and sipped the fiery snake brand medicine. Depending on circumstances she might cut it before or after the placenta was out. Taking a rhizome of phlai (McF. 804), a traditional healing root, she laid it on a clod of soil brought in from outside. From one of the old bamboo house beams, someone had sliced with a knife a sharp-edged, tapering sliver to serve as a cutter. The cord was stroked 3 times, starting near the baby's stomach "to remove the dirt." Then "something that is in the umbilical cord" was pushed back towards the baby's stomach "to prevent a flow of blood." She measured the cord from the baby's abdomen to his knees, and tied off 2 places in it with the holy unspun cotton cord used ordinarily in rituals. Laying the part between the 2 knots on the phlai on its bed of soil, and saying her magic "w'nyan a sam pa nō," she cut the cord with the bamboo cutter. With a chicken leather which had to come "from the mother's yard," she collected a few spider webs from the rafters, mixed them with coconut oil, and painted them around and on the cord-stump, also "to stop the blood-flow." While doing this, Sāi said, "One midwife I know severs the cord by tying it with the thread at 3 places, then burns it with a flame."

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Lek watched over the baby, while Sāi turned towards Dūan. "One looks to the mother first, unless the baby needs help more." First Sāi gave Dūan medicine for the placenta. She rubbed her hands with alum and tried unsuccessfully to work down (klōm) the slippery placenta. Then she told Dūan to get on her hands and knees, and exert all the force she could. Dūan crept around the floor but it still did not come. Sāi then tried hitting Dūan's back 3 times with Dūan's own pillow. Finally she gave Dūan a leaf of betel pepper to chew, hoping to induce a wind-producing nausea and so push out the placenta. In the end Dūan resumed her sitting position and it was pressed out. So the baby would not get pimples, the placenta was cleaned carefully, then put into an old pot, mixed with 2 dishes of salt, and set aside. 844

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While Lek sewed up the partially completed cushion, Sāi laid the baby along her legs, and washed him with soap. Sometimes she washed the baby before the cord was cut, if the placenta came quickly. She used salt to remove the greasy fat from his body, though would have preferred "fermented tamarind to protect him from pustules that enlarge to sores (rōk phu-phōng)." "Soft tissue like a stomach covering his head! What a good sign of progress and fortune!" she exclaimed. She powdered him with face powder (dina-phōng), and painted his abdomen with turmeric.³⁴ "so wind will not make him cry." Covering him with a little piece of old cloth, she laid him on Lek's old winnowing tray (kradōng).

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It was the moment to winnow (rōn) the baby, and link it to home and family. While Lek got the holy unspun cord, others placed on the tray with the baby all manner of traditional things to influence the progress and well-being of the child during his lifetime. Sāi put on the phlai, the clod of soil, and the tapered bamboo she had used to cut the cord "because they will never be used again," but actually these things had a far deeper meaning to all present. Song laid on a school exercise book and pencil, so that his son would have knowledge and a good memory. Mī got a needle for sharp wit. If the baby had been a girl, the needle would have given sewing skills. When all was in readiness, Dūan had to decide on the ones to raise the child aloft, catch the tray as it was dropped, and bless him as the holy thread was tied on. She had to choose these persons carefully, for the child

34. Other mixtures (used also on the mother) were lime-bergamot lemon; or phlai (if possible the one on which the cord was cut), wānām (acorus calamus) (Textor:54-55) and māhāhīng (asafoetida) with burned betel leaf. These were all to keep out wind.

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The next step was to prepare for Duan's post-partum days of rest beside the holy fire. Before the baby arrived the fire-floor had been prepared, but not lighted. Song had chopped down a banana tree, and quartered and trimmed the trunk into four good planks. Along a wall inside their house he had laid them in a square about three feet on each side and 18 inches deep. He remembered that at Chai's birth, the fire had to be in a corner, because of the direction of the celestial Snake. Lek picked up a large round basket and went out to get the soil, which had to come from the north side of the house. Three full baskets she was to get, no less, but there could have been five. She heaped the soil into the frame, smoothing it to a good fire floor. After she poured in the last load, she picked up three handfuls of earth and put them back in the basket. Quickly she took them back to the spot she had been digging and tossed the three handfuls one by one onto the earth, murmuring to the spirit of the land that she was returning the earth she had taken. Back in the house, in each of the four corners of the fireplace, Sai planted a little banana leaf bowl containing rice, sticks of incense, a candle, and flowers. "Some persons add areca nut and betel pepper leaves, but I was not taught to do it that way," she commented. A fire of the sakae wood was laid, and the placenta and cord in the pot placed at the back where they could dry with the heat. To prepare Duan's bed, Song searched the house for a smooth plank about 14-16 inches wide. Not one! So he ran over to a neighbor and borrowed a good one. He cut two banana trunk sections to set this plank up so that it was as high as, and two or so hand spans from, the fireplace. Sai checked that firewood, woodpile, and plank were all parallel to the celestial Snake. Then the fire and the incense in the corners were lit.

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Meanwhile Sai had been washing the lower part of Duan's body and legs with warm, boiled water. She painted Duan's abdomen with turmeric, lime, and alcohol, putting a little on the hands and arms, and now gave her a fresh skirt. "To cure the womb" Sai also gave her a "filtrate" of tamarind, salt, and water to drink, the same potion people also gave to the cherished buffalo on the rare occasions when a calf was born. Finally, she asked Duan to lie on the floor a moment. Putting her foot on Duan's hip she pressed hard, three times on each side, to "close the hipbone" and get the pelvis back into place again.

date of all, Sao Hā Day, one Saturday in April, which was the fifth day of the waxing moon of the fifth month, in the year of the Big Snake. That boy is truly blessed. He will be the best and most respected doctor or teacher. He is in school now and people are always telling him he is bright. Chāi came on a Monday, so he'll be charming, but, alas, always roaming away from home! This new little son has his mother's features, which is as desirable as a daughter's having her father's features. Still, no one knows what characteristics come from a parent. One more thing, Duan. Now you may take medicine as you please." Shortly after, Sāi took leave until the next day.

The new mother turned her face toward the fire and tried to sleep. It was night. Lek was close by, and Song slept in his mosquito net near Chāi's cradle. The fire was so hot it kept waking Duan. Though the smoke made her eyes smart it kept the mosquitoes away. In spite of the discomfort, Duan was eager to have the fire as hot as she could stand it, for this heat and that of the medicine would dry her uterus, rid her of the bad blood and waters of childbirth, restore her strength and stimulate her milk. She forced herself to drink as much hot boiled water as possible to keep out the dreaded wind element that might get into her body and cool her. When, however, the fire was overpowering, she dripped water from a handy jar with a cloth.

The next day, Sāi returned. With warm, boiled water she bathed Duan--this time the upper part of her body also--and the baby. The boiled water was much more important for the mother, but being available, was used for the baby, too. Sāi washed the soiled clothing and the baby's little cloths. Turmeric was again painted on both Duan's and the baby's abdomen, head, and neck to protect from wind. Sāi questioned and examined Duan. Measuring a handspan down from Duan's groin, she pressed outward gently. "I want to see if these particular ligaments on the thigh are joined. They are often damaged and do not heal if the time by the fire is too short. Some mothers cannot walk at all. They have to call a masseur for regular treatment." To "make the ligaments well," she tapped Duan's body all over with the second of the tapping-fruit balls and had her sit on one while bathing. She massaged the muscles, stiff from lying quietly near the fire, by pressing in the ball with her hands and even feet. Medicinal herbs were warmed and laid on Duan's breasts so that the "useless early milk [colostrum] which would give diarrhea" could be worked out and thrown away. "The real milk is not ready for the baby until the third day," Sāi said, "but if the baby is crying much, and if there is milk some mothers start nursing on the second day."

Almost from the moment of his birth, whenever the baby

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cried, Lek had dribbled from her finger warm boiled water into his mouth. Now she mashed up for him a little khua namu banana, honey, and water. Song happened to pass as he was going to work and saying, "Let me give it to my son this first time," took the child in his arms, and pushed it gently in with his fingers. "This variety of banana does not cool, or give diarrhea because its tissue is harder. Uncooked is better than baked because it is easier for the baby to swallow," said Lek, "but baked food is incompatible if wind is in the body." Then she painted medicine on the baby's tongue with a feather.

Duan turned to Lek. "Who would be the best person to start my child on good nursing habits?" Lek mentioned a relative who had much milk for her handsome child. This woman gladly came to give the baby his first suck.

Sai came the third day for the same duties. It was the last day for her, unless something serious happened. Duan's milk came in somewhat that day. She asked, "Is it true, as people say, that the 2 breasts give milk of different consistency, that one is water and the other rice?" Sai answered, "That is an old saying. The important thing is to feed from both breasts at each nursing. Here is medicine for the baby of honey, charred betel leaf, and water. Give it 3 times a day to cool his neck. His medicine is mostly to cool him slowly; yours is to keep you hot on the inside, while the fire warms you outside. Both are to keep out wind. Duan, I would suggest 13 days by the fire, but you are the one to decide. It was 13 for your first child, but each time can be less. Be sure it is an odd number of days. My women are certainly making it short these days! My first fire-rest was 27 days. And think of all the changes coming in! That trader-woman across the canal is using one of those small hot-ashes pots on her stomach. She is lying on a mat under her net, with her new baby. Her 2 other little children come in and out! No fire at all! I have heard they use rubber hot water bottles and electric warming devices in Bangkok. Well, it probably is all right provided there is heat, but to have plenty of milk and strength to work in the fields, then you have to lie by a real fire. The longer you stay, the stronger you are. Bangkok ladies do not have to farm! They want the fire for the fine pale golden color it gives their skin (cf. footnote, p. 71)! Well, now I shall take my final leave." She reached up and took her khuan khon bowl. Smiling, she left the house.

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From then on, Lek and Mi were certainly busy, caring for both children, doing things for Duan, boiling up quantities of water, and cooking. Song put the wood on

854 mosquitos, but then Song bought in Minburi a bamboo frame with be-flowered netting. He also bought little mits to tie onto the baby's hands, so the fingers would not be sucked. Not every baby got these! Most of the time the baby lay naked, but was wrapped when nursed. One cool day they put over him a thick blanket. Lek, Duan, or Song bathed him in boiled water 3 times a day and always after his excretions, which were wiped off with cloths. Then fresh cloth was put under him. On the seventh day since he was thriving [856] he was bathed in ordinary rain water. Every day Lek vigorously squeezed his fingers and legs "to make them straight," which made him yell each time. To speed the drying of the cord, a charred leaf of betel pepper was applied for a [278] while to his navel on which Duan spit saliva several times a day.

853 Duan's milk supply was only fair. For milk stimulation they pressed her nipples and kept the fire hot. She was [262] also taking daily a special nursing curry of banana flower and vegetables (khong liang). One day she ate a cobra curry. A neighbor offered to help nurse the baby but Duan refused. "It is a pitiful sight to see one's child at [854] another's breast." Whenever the baby wailed he was given boiled water but was not necessarily at once picked up. If his crying continued, however, Duan washed her breasts with warm water, pressed out and threw away a little milk, moistened the baby's lips with water, then lifted him on the pillow to her plank. She laid him beside her and leaned over him to nurse, though occasionally took him in her arms. He was nursed about 10 times a day, and also received honey, boiled water, and a bit of banana, too. [278] One day the baby cried a lot, so they painted him with turmeric and gave him baked cobra tail in alcohol to warm him up.

846 As to her own diet, Duan followed the usual practice of limiting herself rigidly to rice with salt, dried fish, and baked khua namua banana. Egg was too cooling! 262 "like glutinous rice, it brought pus to the unhealed cord and the vaginal wound." Duan also avoided "jam" bean which caused madness, fruit, and sweets. Whatever she ate affected her child by secreting into her milk. If she were sick, he would be so too. If he alone became ill, she must watch the foods both he and she ate. All these food instructions would stop only when nursing stopped a year or two later.

846 Duan decided to stay only 11 days by the fire, though Sai had said 13 and she would have liked to stay longer. However, she wanted to get back to work because the transplanting season was approaching. Besides, the

178 a new way was a woman bearing her first child because she
184 was not yet ritually matured. This she wanted to be.
372 Moreover, her self-interest led her to try to profit as
846 much as possible from the experience of elders by first
885 following the old way. By incorporating the experience
of successful child-bearers into her own and the baby's
life and by asking them to initiate actions auspiciously,
she augmented by that much her own competence, and laid
the groundwork for her future progress. Self-responsibility engendered respect for elders. Thus there was no split between old and young over innovations. Experience gave grounds both for conservatism and for changing, but at different age levels.

178 Secondly, changes were adopted by the rich who,
184 spending their money rather conspicuously, sought to maintain and enhance their social position. Their wealth
556 and position were in themselves unquestioned as signs of merit earned in another incarnation.

178 The changes being introduced to Bang Chan were of two
554 kinds: first the prestigious, and second, those giving no increment of esteem, i.e. idiosyncratic changes of taste or convenience; or those reflecting individual circumstances. The prestigious innovations were oriented towards the use of market novelties, modern medical care, urban standards of cleanliness and beauty, and other ways termed "progressive" associated with the city of Bangkok, cynosure of the eyes of the rich. These values were leading certain families away from their original occupation of farming, into the fields of teaching, trading, carpentering, cottage-industry, etc. Since these new occupations brought in steady cash, and large land holders, too, had a good income, an association was found of wealth, prestige, urban interests, and innovation. Comment on the hot ashes container (*fai chut*) indicated that it was a strong symbol of prestige and progress. To use it was "to get away from ignorance and the old way of doing things." It was "cleaner, not hot or ugly, and more convenient." One teacher took it up after reading an advertisement in the newspapers that described glowingly its more efficient heating effect. On the other hand, one woman abandoned the *fai chut* because "it was not hot enough to rid her of stiff muscles," so she went back to the use of the fire. "It is all right for rich Bangkok ladies who want to avoid a scar, but it does not give enough strength for a farmer." She had no urban pretensions. Also in this prestigious aggregate, observed here and there, were the market novelties mentioned above: bed, mat, and mosquito net instead of the plank-bed; kits of medicine from the Chinese pharmacist instead of the old

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home brew; rub-on medicine (yā chup) instead of a fire or fire-container; canned cows' milk, and nursing bottles for the baby, and the bottles washed with salt; the transfer of a baby from the tray to the cloth cradle before the termination of the fire-rest because "he needed fresh air;" and the rejection of the turmeric rub against the wind element as "dirty and ugly."

To use modern medical care was becoming prestigious. Most spectacular here was a case of a prosperous and educated man who had had 9 children, then "feared he could not feed them all," so underwent voluntarily a vasectomy. Patronage of the second class doctors who used modern medications but explained them in traditional terms was frequent among the well-to-do. The Minburi Health Center, a resource in case of over-long and difficult labor, was beginning to be seen as a fashionable place to go for medical care and parturition. The case of the 2 teachers who laid plans ahead to go to the Center (but their quick labor precluded attempting to get there) showed that prestige had a stronger lure than convenience at times. It was much more convenient to bear a child at home, yet one of these teachers even talked about wanting to be delivered in Bangkok at the Woman's Hospital, an extreme of prestige and practical inaccessibility.

The drive toward progressiveness led to conscious re-examining of those "old ways" that could be visually tested. One woman said, "There are fewer spirits (phī) nowadays." There was the mother who pondered the maxim about burning up all the wood collected by the husband to make a child finish tasks when he grew up. Finding it not true, she abandoned it at her next confinement. A man said that the old belief that papaya should not be planted near the house because "it dies easily and doesn't like water," and so would affect a child, was "unreasonable because the harm was not specific (e.g. a threat to skin or eyes). If specific, I might believe it." An opening wedge of disbelief was noted where a woman gave no bit of rice to her baby to start a habit for later benefits because "she was told but didn't believe it," and another who said the "winnowing rite was not important."

In addition to prestigious changes were those due to individual circumstance, taste or preference, and convenience unaffected by social aspirations. One woman rejected going to the Minburi Center for delivery and took up the hot-ashes container instead of a fire because she could better direct her older children, and "it was less hard on them." A poor woman took no medicine during pregnancy because she had no money to buy it. A comment that of recent years medicines were purchased because "women are too lazy to make them up" as in the old days, sounded more personal than socially significant. A change induced by lack of money was that "hot spices

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had lived outside the village and returned to the home of her mother, a traditional midwife, for delivery. Eight other women who were delivered by the same midwife observed (2)juu (1)faj. Two of these 8 women who, by using a hot ashes chamber, ventured to take a step away from the traditional practice were non-Thai (Chinese and Mon). Another, a woman aged 40, was having her 12th child. When we interviewed this woman during pregnancy she said she expected to lie by the fire, but when we visited her after the baby was born she was using a hot ashes chamber. The wife of one of the school teachers, who had observed the traditional (2)juu (1)faj with her first 5 children, said she found "the new way" more convenient; but by using it she had incurred the displeasure of some of the elder women, especially her grandmother.

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Activity and bathing. - Activity appeared to be rather limited during the postpartum period, but the respondents said they could move about to get some things for themselves, to eliminate, etc. We saw women sit up on the plank which served as bed to nurse the baby, change the cloths under it, and help to weigh and measure it (i.e. to assist us). Because of the warmth of the fire, and to avoid the smoke, the women turned from side to side frequently.

Bathing was customary during the postpartum rest period. For the first three days this was one of the midwife's responsibilities in care of the mother (Hanks, 1959).

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Medications. - The 48 women who told us about medications used after childbirth had a total of 83 medicines; i.e., many used more than one kind. With one exception these were taken internally, and all preparations taken internally were mixed with alcoholic liquor (20% alcohol). Of the medications used, only one was prescribed from the Health Center, 4 were home remedies, and the remainder commercial preparations.¹ Two popular brands, snake brand and (1)jae (1)daunung, accounted for 60 per cent of the total.

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Milk stimulation. - As already noted, lying by the fire was thought to be favorable to milk secretion. One woman commented that, since she was not a good milk producer, she *must lie by the fire more than 7 days*. Six women spoke of the hot water which they drank during the postpartum rest period as good for milk production. A large majority of the women mentioned taking (1)kaekeng (1)liang, a broth made with dried

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1. According to the label, some of these were supposed to be useful for menstrual and other complaints, as well as for childbirth. Some were even recommended for treatment of various disorders in men as well as women.

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One infant had congenital stridor when seen by the physician¹ at 164
3 months, but the difficulty in breathing had disappeared
spontaneously before the baby was next visited at 3 1/2 months
of age.

Illness in Early Infancy.

One infant that died on the fifth day was seen when one
day old, at which time neither mother nor physician made any
adverse comment on its condition. The mother, who was not living
with her husband, returned to her work outside the village a
week after delivery, and we were unable to talk with her again.
So far as we could learn from neighbors, this infant had none
of the symptoms concerning which we routinely inquired; namely,
convulsions, vomiting, diarrhea, or fever. 165

A third infant in this series died when he was nearly 2
months old. At 13 days of age, when first seen, this infant
had white patches on his tongue which were diagnosed as monil-
iasis. When the physician saw the child again at 6 weeks of
age he made no adverse comments on its condition. Emotional
reaction to the infant's death was such that we were unable to
get a clear description of events which led up to it from
either parents or neighbors.²

Three infants had skin infections when seen within a few 164
days after birth. The physician commented that skin was more
susceptible to infection when moist than dry and that the babies
had become very warm. The weather was hot, and babies were
bundled up and/or were near the fire. He gave directions for
keeping the skin clean and dusting with sulfa powder.

No deaths from tetanus occurred in this series, although 165
infantile tetanus was prominent among causes of death of infants 164
under one month old (Hauck, 1956).

Medicine Given to Babies During the First Few Days of Life.

On this point, information was obtained concerning 36 of 834
40 babies seen before they were 6 months old. Thirty of these 278 •
were given medicine, sometimes more than one kind. Most of the

1. A physician was present at all interviews with pregnant
women and mothers with very young infants. [124]

2. Although the mother had children by a previous marriage,
this was the first child of this union, born after the parents
had lived together for 9 years. The mother was 41 years old.

854 medications were taken internally, sometimes being painted on
the tongue with a feather; but two preparations were applied
over the abdomen. Some of the medications were described as
"stomach medicine" or "to prevent flatulence." Five different
kinds of proprietary medicine were given to 18 infants. In 13
instances, the medicine given was clearly homemade and included
as major ingredients items such as flattery fruit, (3)luug
(1)yaauu; cobra oil; horseshoe crab; and buffalo skin. The
nature of the medicine, whether homemade or proprietary, was
not clear in 8 instances. Usually medicine for infants was
mixed with honey, but in 2 cases, alcoholic liquor was used as
it customarily was for the mother.

Six newborn infants in this series were given no medicine.
One of these was born at the Health Center. One of the other 2
infants delivered at the Health Center was given homemade medicine later, and no information was obtained on the third. Eye
prophylaxis¹ was probably routine at the Health Center, as, in
2 of the 3 cases delivered there, informants knew that drops had
been put in the infant's eyes. Traditional midwives, however,
did nothing of this sort.

Water for Drinking and Bathing.

853 For the newborn infant as well as for the mother, water for
312 drinking and bathing was boiled and was usually used while hot,
often being kept warm in a vacuum bottle. Either rain water or
canal water might be used depending on what was available at a
given season. The water was dribbled from an adult's fingers
into the infant's mouth. When the mother was no longer lying by
the fire, boiled water was not considered essential for the infant.
Nevertheless, over half the infants seen from this time up to 3
months of age were being given boiled water to drink. After 6
months of age this was rare.

853 In one instance, during the time when a younger sibling
855 received boiled canal water, a 21-month old child was given
312 boiled water also. At the time of a later visit both of these
children were drinking unboiled canal water. In another case
an orphaned boy's formula was made up with boiled water, although

[744] 1. Vaccination for smallpox was the only modern preventive
[751] treatment which we knew to be used in Bang Chan in the absence
[731] of an epidemic. Since a severe epidemic of smallpox with many
deaths ten years previously, health officers came to the Bang
Chan elementary school once a year to vaccinate children, and
other residents of the community could be vaccinated at this
time. Four of the young children whom we visited periodically
were vaccinated, at 4 months, 8 months, 1 and 2 years of age,
respectively.

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better nutrition for all family members or whether to concentrate on the feeding of children or other vulnerable groups, the values of the society should be considered. The importance of a suitable variety of food for health needs to be taught to adults as well as children in Bang Chan. The concept that good choice of food is important in pregnancy and lactation and for the health and growth of children seemed to be entirely absent. Since few believed certain foods to be harmful at these times, however, teaching how to choose foods for health should be easier in Bang Chan than it is in areas where positive taboos are common. 121 262

Behavior different from the traditional one may sometimes lead the way to changed practices among those who observe or hear about it. For this reason, in certain instances an informant who had ventured to deviate from the traditional practice has been identified in this record. Thus, we noted that in a number of ways the women school teachers and the wife of a man teacher deviated from the traditional behavior in Bang Chan. For example, a school teacher's wife used the hot ashes chamber after her fifth child rather than lying by the fire. She was one of two women informants who "ate all kinds of food" at this time when most women in the community restricted their diets very markedly. She did not consider taking the baby out into the sunshine harmful; indeed, she believed it would make the child stronger. This same mother was 1 of 4 in our series who had taken the baby to be vaccinated against smallpox. She and three women school teachers were among those who continued to give their babies boiled water to drink much longer than was customary in Bang Chan. The one person who suggested a specific food (eggs) as being good for a woman to eat during pregnancy was a school teacher. The two women who planned to go to the Minburi Health Center for delivery were school teachers. For lack of time after labor began they did not carry out their plans; but the fact that they intended to do, by choice, what was usually the last resort when labor proved long or difficult, may be significant. 121 183 178

Along with these departures from traditional ways and acceptance of some "modern" practices, the same persons might cling to other sorts of traditional behavior. The wife of a school teacher for example, though she thought that taking the baby into the sunshine might be favorable rather than harmful, said that if the baby were to be out very long she would cover its head with a beret to avoid bringing "cold" into the baby. This same mother took her child to the Minburi Health Center for treatment for a skin infection, but when the condition did not clear up immediately after modern therapy was begun, she took the child to a traditional doctor who prepared a decoction of herbs with which she treated the baby. 741 278

The behavior of respected persons, such as some of the school teachers, should be influential in helping to bring about